



AAC Publications

Lost Brother, Blood & Coin

California, Yosemite Valley

After staring at the Lost Brother formation for weeks on end while soloing routes on El Capitan, I finally ventured over in May to explore. Lost Brother hadn't seen a new route in a decade; however, I quickly found a line following a stark white flake that splits the upper wall; it seems to draw the eye from almost every vantage point on El Cap. After filling my iPod with a full set of *Game of Thrones* audiobooks, I set off to rope-solo the route.

I started by climbing an approach pitch shared by the existing routes to gain a big ledge, then traversed left to a corner system. Easy climbing (5.7 C1) brought me to a series of broken ledges left of the large slab climbed by Prowd (IV 5.5 A3) and right of Back in the Day (IV 5.10). From here, I climbed a full rope length on beak tips up a thin seam (A3) and through a small roof to gain an obvious triangular ledge. Above the ledge, I gained a bottoming seam that had looked good from my scope on the park road; however, it didn't pan out. To continue, I drilled a 90' rivet ladder up bulletproof rock that managed to destroy nine quarter-inch bits. This seemed an appropriate consequence for my roadside hubris.

After that unfortunate section, the route returned to solid cracks and roof systems, leading up and left via a mix of easy free and aid to reach the base of the white flake crowning the route. After a clean C1 section and some manteling onto broken ledges, I gained a stellar bivy ledge (shared with Call of the Yeti) in the middle of the white scar. From here, a long pitch follows a thin and fragile flake to the end of the vertical climbing (A2), and another 280' of moderate climbing (5.8 C1) leads to the summit of Lost Brother.

Blood & Coin (V 5.7 A3) is primarily A2 nailing in thin seams or clean climbing with small gear in splitter cracks. The route took 11 days, spread out over two months, with seven nights total on the wall. Aside from pitches 3 and 4, I anticipate much of this route would go free with a strong attempt. All anchors contain at least two 3/8" bolts. Standout pitches include pitch 3—180' of mostly beak placements on a vertical wall—and pitches 8 and 9, the thin, splitter corner and flake system that makes up the obvious white scar. You can bivy atop pitches 3 and 8 without a portaledge, but the other ledges are not recommended.

The approach to Lost Brother takes a while to dial in and can be frustrating; however, there is a spring available on the main ledge and can take some of the pain out of humping loads. I finished the route in June with water still flowing, though another party returned in September after a drought-filled summer to find the spring was no longer flowing.

Coincidentally, Gabriel Mange, Luke Smithwick, and Richie Copeland established a new route on Lost Brother around the same time: Call of the Yeti (V 5.8 A2). [See report in this AAJ.] With these two new routes, I hope that Lost Brother will become a bit less lost in the coming years.

– Kevin DeWeese

Images



An overview of routes on Lost Brother, including the two new routes from 2014: Blood & Coin (V 5.7 A3) and Call of the Yeti (VI 5.8 A2).



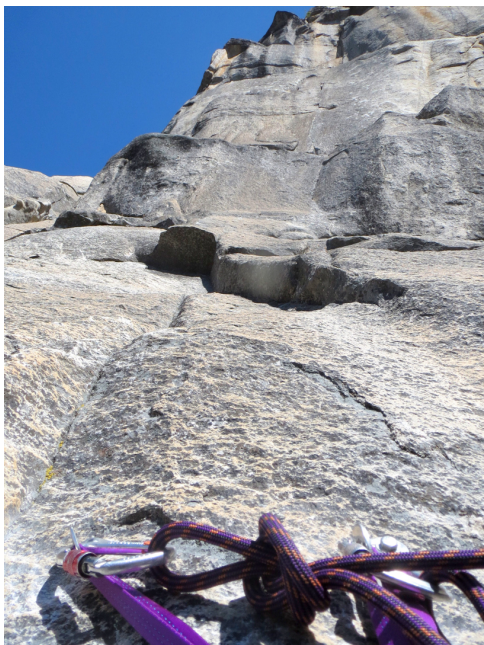
An alternate view of Blood & Coin on Lost Brother.



A photo topo of Blood & Coin. The climbing continues above "The Iron Throne" pitch for 280'.



Looking up pitch 9, one of the best pitches on the route.



Looking up the thin, shallow beak seam on pitch 3.

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